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Message Text

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64
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-02 AID-05 EB-03 SCS-01 SCA-01 DEAE-00

CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-03 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02

SY-02 TRSE-00 USIA-04 NSC-07 SCI-03 OMB-01 IGA-01

DRC-01 /058 W
---------- 061286
P 091740Z OCT 74
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5204
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMCONSUL CALI
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 9011

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR CO
SUBJECT:COUNTRY PROBLEM ASSESSMENT PAPERS

REF STATE 11017"#

1. THE MISSION IS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM IN COLOMBIA. HOWEVER, THE STATEMENT "TRAFFICKING HAS FLOURISHED PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES SELDOM CHALLENGE IT" REQUIRES SOME EXPLANATION.

2. IF "HAS" IN THE ABOVE STATEMENT IS AN INDICATION OF PAST CIRCUMSTANCES THIS IS CERTAINLY TRUE, AT LEAST UNTIL APPROXIMATELY TWO YEARS AGO. SINCE THAT TIME THERE HAS BEEN A DEFINITE "CHALLENGE" ON THE PART OF THE GOC AS WITNESSED BY PASSAGE OF RECENT LEGISLATION AND DECREES WHICH INCREASE PENALTIES, DEFINE NARCOTICS VIOLATIONS AND AUTHORIZE A DESTRUCTION PROGRAM. IT IS OF COURSE TRUE THAT IN THE PAST DAS HAS NOT CONTRIBUTED EFFECTIVELY TO NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT NOR HAS CUSTOMS GIVEN MORE THAN A MINIMAL EFFORT. THE NATIONAL POLICE ON THE OTHER HAND HAVE PROGRESSED FROM AN
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AD HOC APPROACH TO NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT TO A CONCENTRATED

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PROFESSIONAL ATTACK AGAINST NARCOTICS VIOLATORS. PRESENT INDICATORS ARE THAT DAS AND CUSTOMS ALSO ARE RAPIDLY IMPROVING THEIR CAPABILITIES IN THIS AREA.

3. IF "LOCAL AUTHORITIES" REFERS TO LOCAL CASES OF VENALITY ON THE PART OF OFFICIALS THIS AGAIN IS A TRUE STATEMENT WHICH MAY BE APPLIED TO ALL TYPES OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN MOST COUNTRIES. BUT AT THE SAME TIME THERE ARE OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES OF LOCAL EFFORTS. RECENT EXAMPLES/INCLUDE: THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE, NATIONAL POLICE AND CUSTOMS AGAINST DAS PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFIC IN MEDELLIN AND LETICIA; THE ARREST OF A NATIONAL POLICEMAN AND SEIZURE OF AN AIRCRAFT AND APPROXIMATELY 100 KILOS OF COCAINE PASTE IN PUERTO LEGUIZAMA BY NATIONAL POLICE AND THE ACTION OF A NATIONAL POLICEMAN IN IPIALES WHOSEIZED 9 KILOS OF COCAINE, REFUSED A BRIBE OF APPROXIMATELY $12,000 US AND ARRESTED 5 SUSPECTS.

4. THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE ATTORNEY GENERALS OFFICE, NATIONAL POLICE, DAS AND CUSTOMS AT THE BOGOTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HAS DEVELOPED INTO A REASONABLY EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORT.

SURVEILLANCE AND INSPECTION OF ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES HAS RESULTED IN NUMEROUS ARRESTS OF COLOMBIAN AND OTHER NATIONALITIES ENGAGED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. THERE ARE PRESENTLY 60 AMERICAN CITIZENS IN JAIL IN COLOMBIA FOR NARCOTICS VIOLATIONS, THE MAJORITY OF WHICH WERE ARRESTED AT ONE OR OTHER OF THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS.

5. IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY EVIDENT THAT THOSE ARRESTED FOR NARCOTICS VIOLATIONS ARE FINDING IT MORE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN RELEASE FROM JAIL.

6. IN SUMMARY, THE HIGH LEVEL OF NARCOTICS ACTIVITY IN COLOMBIA DOES NOT STEM FROM A LACK OF WILLING CHALLENGE ON THE PART OF COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES BUT FROM A VARIETY OF FACTORS INCLUDING THE GEORGAPHIC LOCATION AND VASTENSS OF COLOMBIA, THE LACK OF ALL KINDS OF EQUIPMENT AND A RELATIVELY UNSOPHISTICATED LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITY, AN ENTRENCHED AND WELL FINANCED CRIMINAL ELEMENT WITH A WELL ESTABLISHED CAPACITY TO SUBVERT ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS AND THE RISING DEMAND FOR NARCOTICS WHICH MAKES IT INCREASINGLY CONFIDENTIAL

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DIFFICULT FOR ANY ENFORCEMENT EFFORT TO STEM THE TIDE.
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NOTE BY OCT: #REFTEL AS RECEIVED.

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